

REMARKS

Claims remaining in the present application are numbered 1-2, 4, and 7-24. Claims 1, 2, 4, and 7-10 have been amended herein. Claims 3 and 5-6 have been cancelled herein. Claims 23 and 34 are new. No new material has been added.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

Claims 4 and 6-12 are objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for indicating allowable subject matter.

Applicants have amended Independent Claim 1 to include the features of allowable claim 6, including intervening Claim 5. As such, Applicants submit that amended Independent Claim 1 and dependent Claims 2, 4, and 7-22 are in condition for allowance and Applicants respectfully solicit allowance of Claims 2, 4, and 7-22.

Applicants have added new Claim 23 that includes the features of previously presented Independent Claim 1 and the features of allowable Claim 4, including intervening Claim 2, which the Examiner has indicated as allowable matter. As such, Applicants submit that Independent Claim 23 is in condition for allowance and Applicants respectfully solicit allowance of Claim 23.

Applicants have added new Claim 24 that includes the features of previously presented Independent Claim 1 and the features of allowable Claim 4, including intervening Claim 2, or allowable Claim 6, including intervening Claim 5, which the Examiner has indicated as allowable matter. As such, Applicants submit that Independent Claim 24 is in condition for allowance and Applicants respectfully solicit allowance of Claim 24.

Rejections

Claims 1-3, 5 and 13-22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Imaino (U.S. Patent No. 5,929,326) in view of Fukuda (U.S. Patent No. 6,181,520). Applicants submit that the rejection is moot in view of the Allowable Subject Matter indicated in the current Office Action and in view of the amendments made to Independent Claim 1.

As such, Applicants respectfully request the rejections be removed and Applicants respectfully solicit allowance of Claims 1-2, 4, and 7-22.

Applicants have added Independent Claims 23 and 24 and submit that these Independent claims overcome the rejections of record and respectfully request allowance of Claims 23 and 24 based on the reasons for allowance of Claims 4 and 6-12.

CONCLUSIONS

In light of the above remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the rejected claims. Based on the amendments presented, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 1-2, 4, and 7-24 overcome the rejection of record and, therefore, Applicants respectfully solicit allowance of these claims.

Applicants respectfully request that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case. Should the Examiner have a question regarding the instant response, the Applicants invite the Examiner to contact the Applicants' undersigned representative at the below listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,
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